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## EPA Launches Commuter-Incentive Program in CA

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced it has launched a pilot program in California's Bay Area aimed at reducing pollution by encouraging employers to provide incentives for their workers to carpool, bicycle or walk to work.

Under the program, known as the Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative, EPA said participating employers agree to provide a \$32.50 per month stipend to their employees for the use of mass transit or van pools, "buy-out" employee parking spaces or offer telecommuting options. EPA said companies must also appoint a "commute coordinator," provide a guaranteed ride home for late-working transit commuters and offer at least three other alternative-commuting benefits, such as bike lockers and pre-tax transit credits.

In exchange for compliance with the program, EPA said it will recognize participating companies as one of the "Bay Area's Best Workplaces for Commuters." The agency noted that it plans to expand the program nationally if its efforts in California are successful.

Bayer Corporation, which was named to EPA's first best workplace list under the program, said it offers such employee incentives as walking shoes and umbrellas for those who walk to work. EPA said other companies offer vacation credits for time spent on mass transit.

EPA said it also maintains a website for the program, located on the World Wide Web at <http://www.commuterchoice.gov>, that allows employers to calculate the potential savings associated with commuter-incentive programs.